

Spectrum

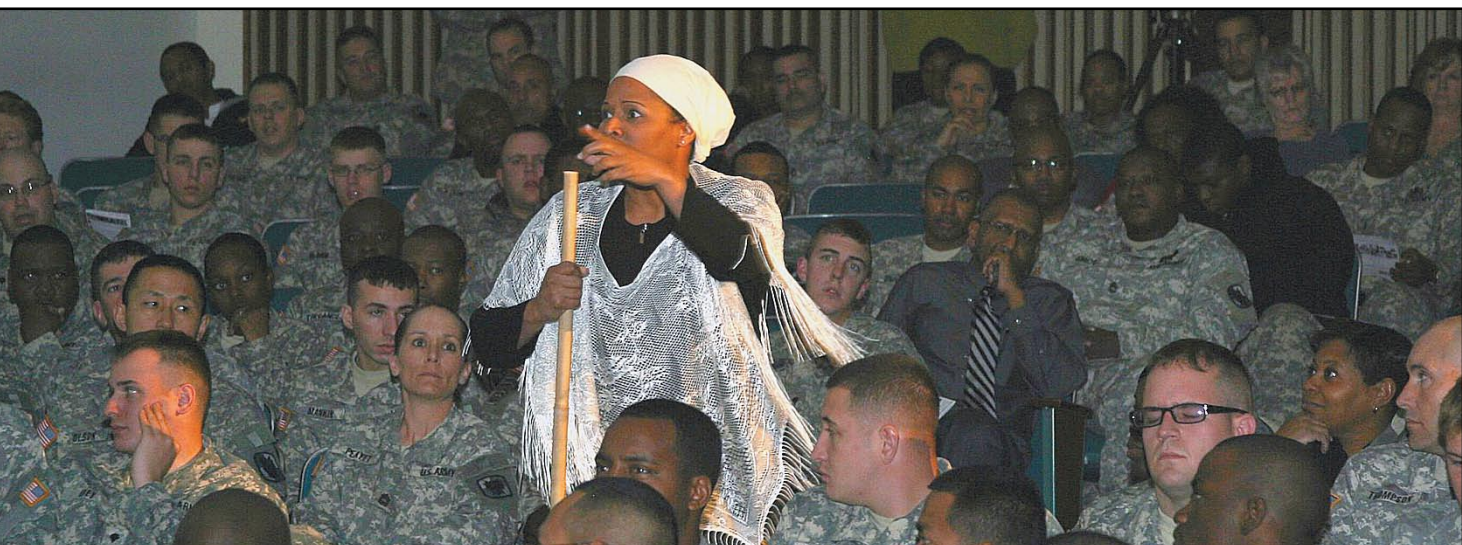


Photo by Charmain Z. Brackett

Fort Gordon observes African-American history

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The Fort Gordon African American/Black History Month Command program Feb. 1 at Alexander Hall was a multifaceted event which paid tribute to the past while focusing on the future.

A bulk of the program focused on those African-Americans who had sacrificed for their country.

A parade of historic figures provided links to the past.

Master Sgt. Sylvia Whorley of the 116th Military Intelligence Group brought Harriet Tubman back to life. Master Sgt. Gorgis Jones of the 15th Regimental Signal Brigade paid tribute to Abraham Lincoln.

Sgt. 1st Class Elroy Allen portrayed Carter Woodson, for whom the program was themed. Woodson was known as the founder of Black History Month.

Other famous African-Americans depicted included Elizabeth “Bessie” Coleman,

the first African American female pilot, and Colin Powell.

Also honored were the men and women who had been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. A slide show of their faces was flashed on a large projection screen.

Col. John Baker, 35th Signal Brigade commander, said the program was designed to “celebrate our diversity.”

Prior to introducing the guest speaker, Baker reflected on an experience he had while serving in Baghdad.

There were several detainees in the cement cell blocks, and they began to talk to each other.

Soon, they discovered the man to the left or right of them was a Sunni or a Shiite with a different belief system.

“They were screaming in Arabic,” he said.

Sadly, the translations of their rants were death threats to the other prisoners who they could not even see through the walls. Their hatred was based on what they called themselves and who their families were.

“If countries don’t get it right, you and I are there to teach them there is a better way,” he said.

The guest speaker for the program was retired Lt. Col. Alfonzo Jackson, president of the Colon-Dryden Augusta Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen Inc.

A retired Navy pilot, Jackson said he represented Dr. Martin Luther King’s dream. His occupation was part of the realization of the dream.

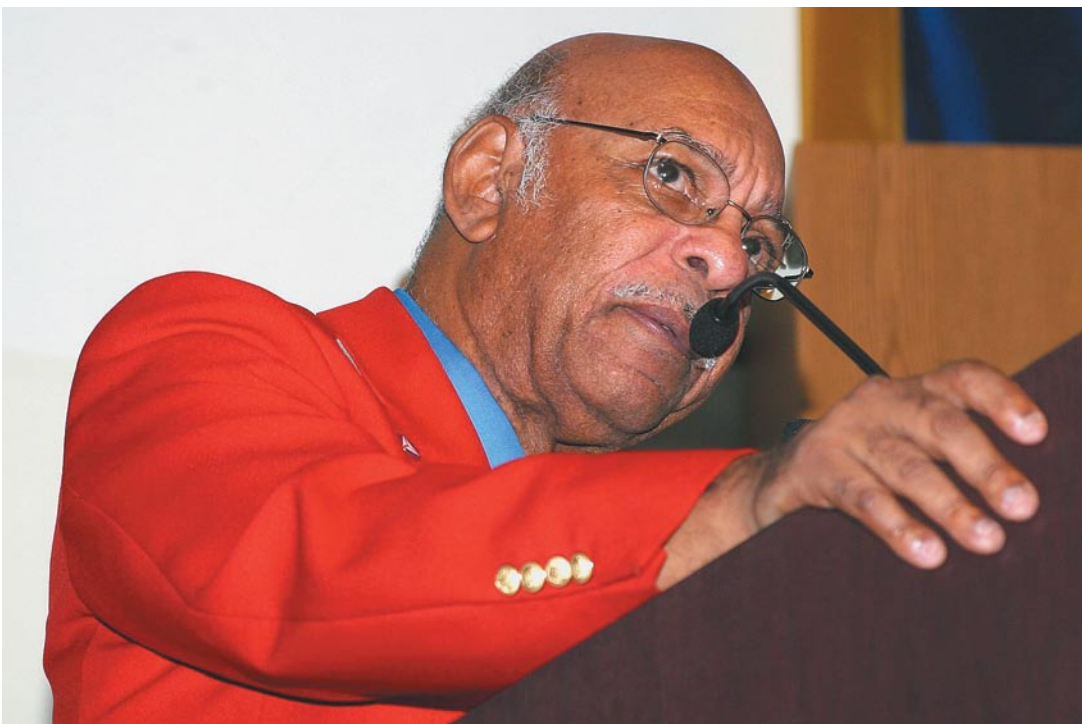
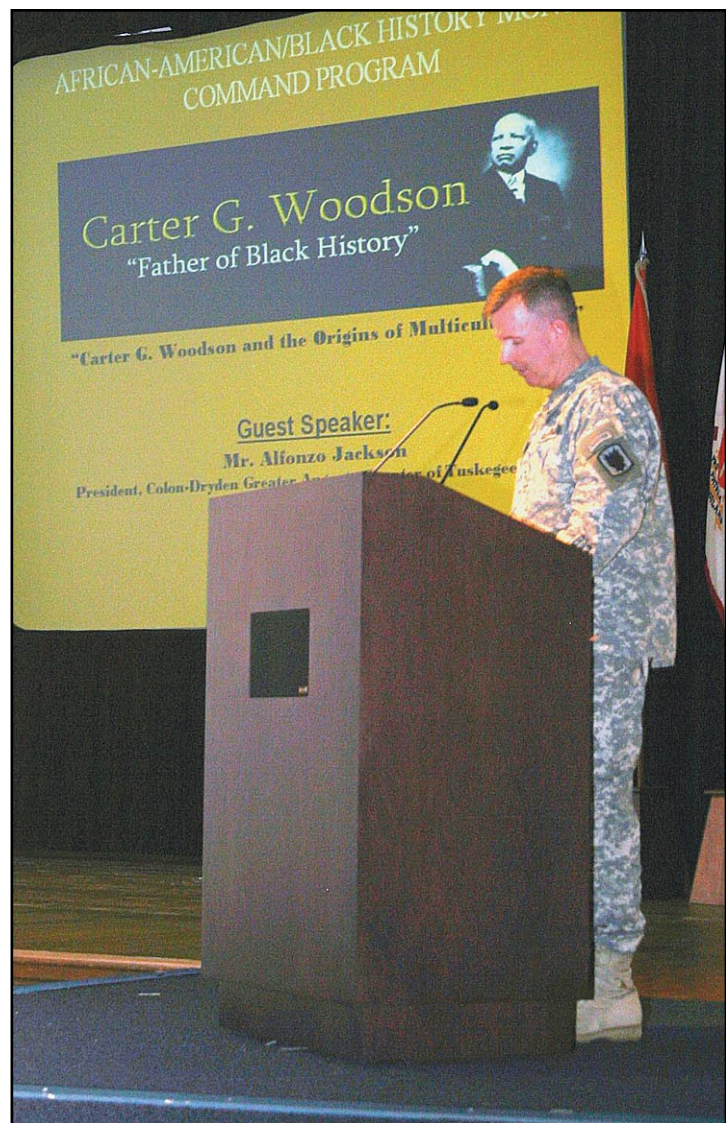
“I was only able to do that because of the ones whose shoulders I stood on,” he said.

He said he hoped his life gave others the ability to go further than he had. He lent his shoulders for others to stand upon.

Jackson told the audience to realize one’s purpose in life.

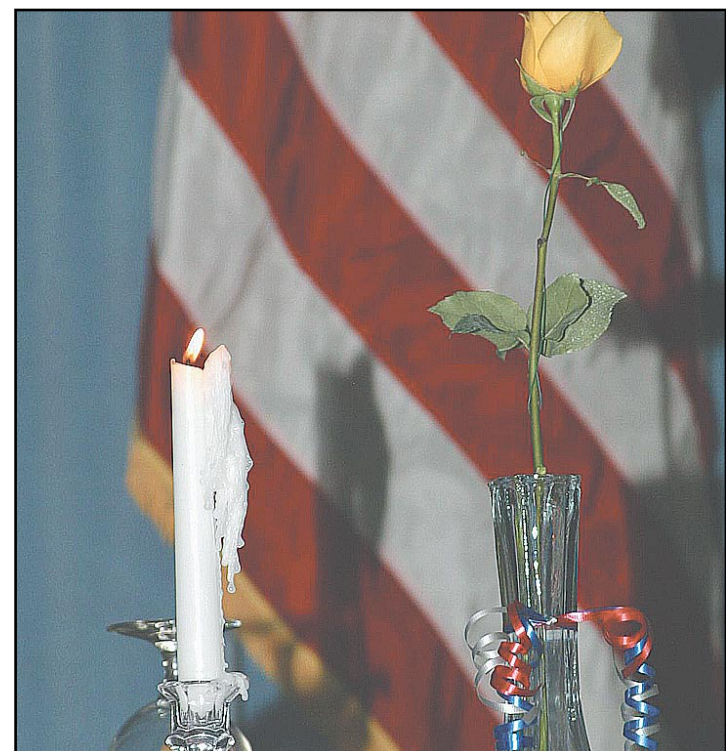
“We were put here for the distinct reason to make the world a better place,” he said.

(Left) Master Sgt. Sylvia Whorley of the 116th Military Intelligence Group, portrays Harriet Tubman at the African-American/Black History Month Command Program Feb. 1 at Alexander Hall. (Below) Col. John Baker, 35th Signal Brigade commander, reminds the capacity-filled auditorium audience the program was designed to “celebrate our diversity.”



Photos by Melvin Farpley

The guest speaker for the program retired Lt. Col. Alfonzo Jackson, president of the Colon-Dryden Augusta Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen Inc. shared his hope for a better world and the experiences he and his generation faced as racial barrier-breaking pilots in the Army.



(Above) For a few moments all attention was focused on the candle and single yellow rose as (below) Marine Lance Corporal Dorian Lindsey, U.S. Marine Corps Detachment, salutes during the Tribute to the Fallen.



Sgt. 1st Class Sheila Brown, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 35th Signal Bde., sings “Hero” during the Fort Gordon African-American Command Program Feb. 1 in Alexander Hall.

